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FARM PROBLEMS IN TEXAS SCHOOLS;



AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF SOCIAL
AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF AGRICULTURE
IN THREE SELECTED TEXAS SCHOOLS //

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FOREWORD

In recent years the Congress and the President of the United States have worked with farmers towards a solution of the problems faced by the agricultural industry. From their efforts has come the National Farm Program, designed to give the Nation's farmers opportunity to solve their own problems, individually and collectively.

But has agriculture taken full advantage of its opportunities? Have the individual farmers and their families realized and utilized those opportunities? In fact, do they even know what can be accomplished with their Farm Program?

In the firm belief that within the framework of the National Farm Program lies the means of solving most of the farmer's problems if only the farmers themselves realize the fact, the Southern Division of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration of the United States Department of Agriculture has inaugurated an experimental program in an effort to acquaint members of farm families, and city families as well, with the problems of agriculture and the means at hand to solve these problems. Medium for this educational effort is the school system, the basis of education. The idea is to first teach the children, to interest them in the farmers' problems and their solution. Through them the families will be reached. Also, students who become interested in those problems and who seek means of solving them will be better citizens and will be of more value to the Nation.

To that end, the Southern Division of the AAA assigned Miss Nell Bledsoe to investigate the possibilities of such an educational effort. Working in cooperation with Dr. L. A. Wood, State Superintendent of Public Instruction in Texas, Mr. Tolbert Patterson, Deputy State Superintendent of Education, Mr. B. F. Vance, Administrative Officer of the AAA in Texas, and others, Miss Bledsoe interested the principals and teachers of three schools - Hearne, Tabor, and Franklin - in the idea.

This report surveys the work done and the results accomplished to date.

FARM PROBLEMS IN TEXAS SCHOOLS

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FARM PROBLEMS IN TEXAS SCHOOLS

An experimental study of Social and Economic Problems of Agriculture in Three Selected Texas Schools

Introduction

The economy of the South is based on agriculture. The welfare of folks in cities, in town, in villages, and on farms depends on the prosperity of agriculture. The disadvantages by which agriculture is and has been handicapped over a period of years are the basic reasons for the existence of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration and other agricultural programs. These programs, all joined together as the National Farm Program, are intended to offset an accumulation of economic ills with which farmers are faced. They grew out of the need of farmers to deal with these ills on a cooperative basis, to use the powers of Government to help themselves.

Those who are working with the AAA believe that farm people, and others, whose economic welfare is dependent on the farming industry, need to know facts concerning economic and social conditions that affect that industry; to know the operations of Government and attempts by Federal agencies to meet economic crises that were and are facing the American Nation; and to realize that the farmers themselves possess the power, ability, and means to meet these crises.

Farmer participation in the Agricultural Adjustment Program is high. But many farmers who are participants in the program do not understand its significance, the reasons for its existence, and benefits that exist for them through maximum use of its provisions. This fact is illustrated by the failure of farmers to take advantage of soil-building payments available to help them carry out soil-building practices needed on their farms, 1/ by their failure to grow their own food and feed supplies 2/ although assistance is available under the program for doing so. It is again illustrated by the lack of participation of farmers in the democratic election of their own representatives to operate the AAA Program on a county and community basis. 3/

An Educational Plan

Representatives of Triple A long have been interested in acquainting people with their social and economic problems and with legislation intended to help solve these problems. With accurate information of the economic background an objective evaluation may be made of farm legisla-

1/Of the \$7,110,000 available through AAA Program for carrying out soil-building practices on Texas farms in 1939, \$2,230,000 or 31.4% was unused.

2/According to the 1935 farm census over 40 percent of Texas farms were without a garden, 24.2 percent without a milk cow, 45.8 percent without hogs, 15 percent without chickens, 70.6 percent without plowable pastures.

3/Of Texas farmers eligible to participate in committee elections in 1939, only 8.6% took part.

tion and the farm program. With a better understanding of the program, farm people may take advantage of benefits which are available. How and where can a study relating to these factors be more accurately and objectively made than by teachers and students of our educational system?

With this idea in mind, Mr. B. F. Vance, Administrative Officer in Charge of the AAA in Texas, Miss Nell Blodsoe of the Southern Division of the AAA, and others discussed with Dr. L. A. Woods, State Superintendent of Public Instruction, and other leading educators 4/ of the State the advisability of incorporating in the schools courses relating to social and economic problems of the South and of Texas. The part of the AAA in the plan was to furnish to the Teachers available factual materials relating to the problems. The AAA, although not a research agency, from a wide variety of sources has accumulated and assimilated much factual information relating to farm problems.

As a result of the endorsement and cooperation of these educational leaders, it was decided to select two or three schools where the teachers were willing to work out such plans on an experimental basis.

With the help of the deputy state superintendent, after talking with the superintendents, principals and teachers involved, three schools in the same district were selected in which to work out the plan. One was Tabor, a nine-grade rural school in Brazos County; another, Franklin, a small-town consolidated school where a large percentage of the students come from farms; a third, Hearne, a small town school, where a good many of the students live in town. Both of the latter schools are in Robertson County.

It was hoped to accomplish several things by these experiments: first, to find out if the idea was feasible; second, to see if the course had any value to students and adults of the community from the standpoint of meeting their needs and challenging their interest; and third, if the idea was sound, to set a pattern that would be of value to others interested in the same thing.

The purpose of the course was primarily to help students to become aware of the problems of their community, to help them understand and evaluate efforts of different agencies to solve these problems, and to help them see what they and their parents could do to help solve them. Such courses, if successful, would not only inform students of existing community problems, but also would arouse the interest of the adults of the community.

The teachers in the schools already mentioned considered the materials available through the AAA office and, in some instances, blocked out preliminary plans for the study. Units of study did not necessarily follow a set

4/Mr. Tolbert Patterson, Deputy State Superintendent
Mr. E. R. Alexander, Head of Agricultural Education, A & M College
Mr. J. G. Umstattd, Professor of Education, University of Texas
Mr. F. A. Davison, Superintendent Franklin Schools
Mr. L. A. Williams, Superintendent of Hearne Schools

plan but developed according to classroom interest. At each of the schools a good deal of preliminary discussion went on between the teachers and students before the actual study was planned. Each group was interested in a different approach to the problem, although all were interested principally in rural problems.

In each case Mr. Vance discussed farm conditions with students and with teachers in order to give them a broad view of the problems. Other representatives of the AAA met and talked with some of the classes. Several pictures, including "The River", "Wise Land Use Pays", and others relating to agriculture and agricultural problems, were presented to give a background for the study as well as to create student interest.

Narrative Description of Studies

The following is a descriptive record of teacher objectives, plans, and procedure in the courses relating to selected problems of their own communities.

This report does not describe scientifically worked out units of instruction, but gives the story of an idea developed by teachers working under the difficulties of crowded class schedules, unfamiliar materials, and with no pattern to point the way -- but an idea which these teachers believe to have sound educational value.

Social and Economic Problems of Tabor Community

Tabor community is in the center of a farming section where cotton has been the main crop for many years. All the children in the Tabor school live on farms. Mr. U. D. Robinson, principal and teacher of 8th and 9th grade history and math became interested in possibilities of a study by his classes of social and economic conditions in Tabor community. After preliminary discussion of materials and plans he and the 29 students of his class decided to use Friday of each week for study and discussion of community problems.

In the case of all the schools that have worked in this experiment, the consideration of the problems was primarily motivated by the desire to solve them. In order to do this it was necessary to bring the study down to a community basis.

It is sometimes difficult for students and adults to see the relation of existing problems to themselves and their community. Many times we read staggering figures about the extent of soil erosion in the South and yet do not realize that the miniature grand canyon in the field across the road is glaring evidence that our present and potential source of food is washing into the sea. We can glibly quote that over 50% of Southern farmers are tenants and yet not realize that the one-room dilapidated shacks dotted along the road house some of those same tenants.

It was Mr. Robinson's idea, and that of the other teachers as well, to help students not only to see and understand their community problems, but also to see their effect on the every-day living of each individual, with the ultimate intention of finding effective means to offset or remove them.

The steps included:

Study of the problems, from the individual and community standpoint, followed by comparisons with other localities.

Effects of problems in terms of community living.

Present efforts and opportunities, through farm agencies and otherwise, to solve the problems.

Further effective steps to improve local living standards and conditions.

The teacher and students of Tabor school decided that the best way to go about a study of local problems was to make a survey to discover what the problems were. Students in the class surveyed 60 farms, approximately half of the community, which they believed to be fairly representative. The survey was made outside school hours, each student surveying farms in his neighborhood. Both boys and girls took part. Tenancy, home ownership, housing, erosion, soil conservation, food and feed supplies on each farm, home conveniences all were included. Mr. Robinson, who taught math to the same class, used the math period for tabulation of survey figures and for working out numerous problems that came up in connection with the survey. In history class the students studied the World War, its effect on the farm economy and on agricultural prices, and the direct relation to community problems as revealed by the Tabor survey.

The people of the community unhesitatingly and willingly answered student questions; helped all they could in the survey. Only one objection was made to the inquiries. An old Italian farmer living on a remote farm objected to answering any questions because he thought they were preliminary to a raise in taxes.

The survey brought to the attention of both students and teacher conditions that they had not realized existed. It proved a medium for their enthusiastic interest in community problems.

From the survey the students found out that 56% of the farm families in their community were tenants, that many of the houses in the community were unscreened, and that many were without conveniences. They found that only 25 houses on 60 farms boasted a cost of paint. They discovered that only four of the houses included in the survey had means of sewage disposal.

They learned that soil waste was one of the most serious problems of their community. A good deal of time and emphasis were placed on this study.

The students investigated causes and kinds of erosion. They classified the soils of Tabor according to the extent of erosion. This classification, although not a scientific one, brought pointedly to the attention of the class the severity of erosion in the community. They discussed practices suitable to the land according to the degree of erosion. For example, they decided that land severely eroded and gullied should be taken out of cultivation altogether and planted to pasture or trees.

They classified crops grown in the community into soil-depleting, soil-building and neutral. The discussed advantages of crop rotation and diversified farming.

They found out about farming methods used in the community, steps being taken to prevent soil waste. They were interested in the assistance available through farm programs to help farmers carry out the necessary soil conserving practices. They asked this question, "What is there in these programs that will help us conserve our soil?" And finally they asked, "What else can farmers in this community do?"

Opportunities through the farm programs for farmers in Tabor community were considered in detail; soil-building practices suitable to local farms, payments made by the AAA for carrying out the practices necessary to the protection of the soil, soil-building allowances for each farm, opportunities for increasing food and feed supplies of farm people, the democratic operation of the farm program, payments and loans which add to the income of farm people.

Throughout the study of this and other problems, conditions within their own community were used by the students as a basis for comparison with other localities and with the South as a whole.

Citizenship and the Farm Program

Seventy-five percent of the students at Franklin School live on farms. Ten schoolbuses bring around 375 students to school daily. Mrs. F. A. Davison at Franklin teaches twelfth grade students civics; training in citizenship in the home, on the farm, in the community, in the classroom, on the school-ground. She teaches the operations and functions of government -- for knowledge of government is necessary to perform intelligently the duties and accept the responsibilities of a citizen.

The three-week study called Citizenship and the Farm Program was a part of this civics course. It was a study of legislative enactments, governmental functions and set-up, and governmental processes through the examination of actual examples.

At the beginning of the study, talks by agricultural leaders and movies relating to farm problems gave students an over-all view of the problems facing agriculture.

Student activities started with a brief consideration by Mrs. Davison and her students of the economic background leading to the need for agricultural legislation. They considered high tariffs and their effect on agricultural exports, high freight rates and what they mean to Texas farmers, fixed industrial prices, and other disadvantages to farmers reflected in a dwindling farm income. They discussed low farm income and its implications in terms of below-standard living conditions. They examined farm programs resulting from legislative enactments passed to alleviate farmer troubles. Here was evidence of the immediate relation of political and economic democracy.

Later the further relation of economic and political democracy was illustrated when students considered marketing quota referenda. Under the AAA program farmers make economic decisions by ballot relative to the amount of a given agricultural commodity to be sold on the market.

Because of the high rate of participation in the AAA - over 90% in Robertson County - because of failure by farmers to take full advantage of opportunities available to them through this program, and because of its democratic operation on a county and community basis, the class used AAA and related programs in their study as examples of farm legislation and the administration of farm programs.

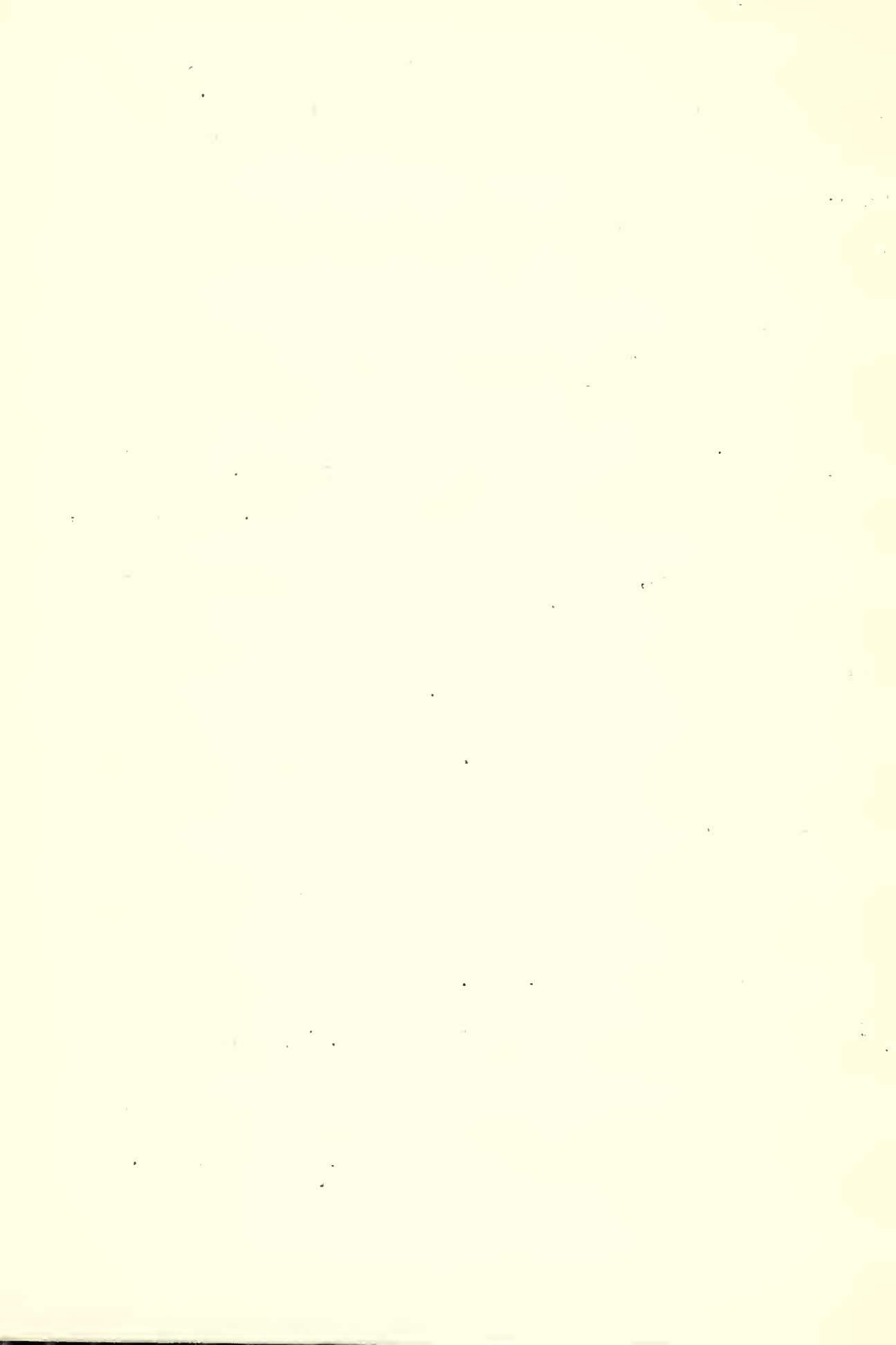
The local democratic operation of the Agricultural Adjustment Program was used as an example of democracy in action on a community basis. Students considered the annual county and community elections where farmers elect their own representatives to locally administer the program. They learned that farmer participation in these elections was very low - in 1940, only 2.9% of those eligible participated in Robertson County. They inquired of their parents, of farmers in the community, of committeemen why farmers did not take part in the committee elections. They discussed with county and community committeemen their duties, qualifications, pay.

On the one hand, the operation of the program afforded a pattern of democracy on a county scale. On the other, the committee election returns illustrated one of the major problems of the democratic system - the failure to take part in the intelligent selection of democratic leaders. The teacher emphasized the right and responsibility of citizens to express their political opinion by voting.

Students discussed the administrative set-up of the AAA from producers to the Secretary of Agriculture. Later, after this study was over and the students had occasion to study about other cabinet members, Mrs. Davison said they spoke of Secretary of Agriculture Claude R. Wickard as of an old friend.

Inquiry into local farm conditions in the community brought to light other opportunities for training in citizenship. Investigation showed that although participation in the farm program was high, the number availing themselves of opportunities under the program to carry out needed soil-building practices on their farms, to grow gardens, and to raise feed for livestock was low. Mrs. Davison stressed the idea that a good citizen not only goes to the polls to help make an intelligent selection of leaders to direct our political affairs, he does his share at home and in his community to improve the Nation's economic conditions as well.

In class discussion, the students concluded that for a farmer to be a good citizen, he must contribute his share to better living at home and in his community. He must raise a good garden, keep a cow, hogs, chickens so that his family will have plenty to eat. They decided that



strip-cropping, contour farming, adding fertilizer to the soil- taking the necessary precautions against the present and future waste of soil resources - all were requirements of citizenship.

The students questioned farmers in their communities about soil-building practices applicable to their farming region. They considered soil-building practices which might be carried out on local farms and for which payments were made under the AAA programs.

Examples of farm legislation directly relating to the economic welfare of farm people were used to show the relation between the three branches of government, how the "balance of power" operates, and to illustrate the steps - from the time a bill is introduced to Congress until it is signed by the President - necessary to legislative enactment.

The study centered around a consideration of the provisions and passage of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act and included study and discussion of the purposes and provisions of the Act. This act was used as an example of how legislation involves through the democratic processes, that is, through the demand of Congressmen's constituents. This farm bill, passed in 1936, was the outgrowth of farmer demand after the invalidation of the AAA Act of 1933 by the Supreme Court decision in the Hoosac Mills Case.

The Supreme Court decision illustrated to the students the relation of the three departments of government as to "balance of power" which they had already discussed.

The Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act was used to illustrate Congressional procedure in passing legislation and the steps necessary to legislative enactment. The class acting as an imaginary Congress introduced the bill in the House, sent it to the proper committee, heard witnesses, discussed amendments, followed the whole Congressional procedure through both houses to the time when it was ready for the President's signature. They were able to get a vivid picture of the organization of Congress and the procedure in the passage of legislative enactments - to "see" Congress in action.

The study, Citizenship and the Farm Program, by its local application, was intended to help students see that government is not something set apart in the National or State Capitol, but that the people - you and I and the neighbors - are the government. It was intended to help them understand their responsibility to make democracy work through intelligent participation in the democratic processes. Its purpose was to show the students that the permanent solution of farm problems will evolve from an intelligent understanding of rural problems by farmers and others through channels of democratic procedure.

Social and Economic Conditions of Today

"Among the most outstanding additions to the curriculum of Hearne High in recent years is a new class started at mid-term. It is an experimental class called SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS OF TODAY and is being sponsored and aided in organization by the AAA office of College Station, Texas. It is taught by Mr. Williams, our Superintendent, and under his able leadership the class is proving that high school students are capable of studying and are very much interested in their Nation's present welfare. We of the class have bright hopes that this type of class will spread all over Texas, and that we may have been of some help in starting this movement toward a better understanding of our Nation's problems and function." ----- found in student notebook.

Hearne, according to the 1940 census, has a population of 3700 people. The white high school has about 260 students, 50 of whom are seniors. The town is located in an agricultural section and dependent to a large extent on farm trade. As one of the students put it, "If the farmer fails, the storekeeper, the filling station man, the drug store man are stuck with their products. The manufacturer can't sell his goods; men are thrown out of work; business goes down like the Titanic."

The Superintendent of Hearne Schools, Mr. L. D. Williams, was interested in the idea of including courses in the school curriculum that would acquaint students with the social and economic problems with which this generation is faced. He was so interested that in spite of a very crowded schedule he decided to organize and teach such a course himself.

At the assembly period he explained to the high school students the proposed study, its purpose, warned them that they would have to work very hard if they chose to be a part of the class, and asked for volunteer students. Twelve students volunteered, six seniors, six juniors. Later two more students joined the class. The study was set up as a separate course meeting one hour daily. It started February 3, and lasted until the end of school on May 20.

The course was new. Although there was a good deal of material available much of it was unorganized. But teacher and students experimented together to get as much value from the study as possible and to develop the basis for a future plan of work.

There were at least three major objectives Mr. Williams hoped to accomplish by the study. He hoped the students would be aroused to a realization of problems that this generation must face: What is the average per capita income in the South? What are some of the causes of this low income? What is the rate of tenancy in the South? How much money is available for education as compared with other sections? What is the extent of soil erosion in the South? What will the present War mean to the cotton farmer in Texas?

He wanted them to be able to make an objective evaluation of efforts being made to solve the problems through such movements as the National Farm Program. What is the reason for the existence of such agencies as Agricultural Adjustment Administration, Farm Security Administration, Rural Electrification Administration, Tennessee Valley Authority? What is the AAA doing for farmers? What are its defects? Is the farmer better off with or without the AAA Program? What is the FSA doing to help rural people? the REA?

He hoped that such a study would start them thinking seriously of possibilities in the present and future for the solution of the problems -- even more than that -- to begin asking themselves the question: What can we do?

Some of the students in the class lived on farms. Those who did not could readily see the immediate relation of rural and urban life and prosperity, that rural problems were actually mutual problems of city, town and country.

Students from the beginning were interested in their part in helping solve the problems and in how to bring their ideas before the community. As expressed by one student, "The idea was to get at the heart of the problem, then present it to the community in the most beneficial way."

During the study of soil waste and conservation, one girl explained her interest in erosion, "Because the little five-acre farm which is my home is facing this problem."

She continued, "For the last four or five years we have worked this land. Last year at the upper end it began washing. Just below our home is a large ditch that fills with muddy water when it rains. A part of this mud is from our land. The problem is: How can I advise my father and mother (if they will listen to me and I think they will for they seem interested in this study) as to how they can keep this little place productive and not let the soil wash away."

Later when questioned about her success in persuading her parents to take precautions for the protection of the soil, this same student answered, "Well, my daddy plows around the hill now instead of up and down as he did before."

The scope of study in this class was very broad, especially at the beginning. Discussion topics, largely relating to rural problems, were taken from local papers, magazines. Students brought in topics, made talks from material on hand, discussed community problems that they selected from any number of sources. They collected materials, prepared briefs, gave reports to the class.

Each student had a notebook in which he kept informational material, mimeographed reports given in class, along with newspaper clippings, pictures, critical analyses of talks and movies, or whatever he liked. Students did their own typing and mimeographing, planned their own notebooks.

In connection with the reports, students often prepared diagrams, charts, maps to illustrate them. One boy took pictures of a field badly damaged by erosion and of a cut-over forest, illustrating careless use of forest resources.

All during the study, many of the students were doing supplementary reading outside of class. Occasionally visitors would come in to talk to them about farm and town problems. Moving pictures, relating to the study, were shown to the class. A picture exhibit was brought in giving an over-all-view of farm problems since the first World War and attempts that have been made by farm agencies to help solve them.

The reports were informal, frequently interrupted by questions and remarks from both teacher and students. Discussions, criticisms, suggestions developed from the reports. The topics varied. Though seemingly selected at random, the problems were interrelated and were those that immediately affect the social and economic life of Hearne community. They included such topics as freight rate structure, the high rates in the South and Southwest as compared with rates in the East, the effect on the economy of the South; the low purchasing power of agricultural products; tenancy, health, housing, and education.

The students considered low farm income, its causes, its effects on living conditions in the South. This example - a farmer sells wheat for from 60 to 80 cents a bushel which sells as puffed wheat for \$32.00 a bushel - was used to emphasize the small amount of the consumer's dollar that goes to the farmer.

They read and talked about the National Farm Programs, the Agricultural Administration and other agencies that are working toward the improvement of farm income and of rural living. They considered effective ways of presenting the problems to the public and of working out their solutions by community cooperation.

Reading, reports, and discussions went on for several weeks with no particular emphasis on any one problem. Then the students decided to spend two or three weeks on a more detailed study of the waste of soil resources and ways to offset this waste^{1/} in Robertson and adjoining counties. It included evidences, causes, effects in terms of community living, and possible cures of soil erosion in local communities, as well as social and economic repercussions of continued depletion of soil resources. There was much class discussion of ways to include Robertson county in a soil conservation district, of reasons why farmers failed to take advantage of soil-building allowances available to them through the Agricultural Conservation Program.

For many years it has been a policy of the Hearne Superintendent to have the commencement programs of the high school presented by the students rather than to have the more conventional type of commencement speech. So it was decided that a panel discussion of problems considered in the class, Social and Economic Problems of Today, would be an interesting way to end the study as well as an effective means of creating

^{1/} A detailed account of this study called Waste of Natural Resources is included with this report.

community interest in local problems. The students who made a study of the problems were to comprise the panel, led by an experienced leader,^{1/} the audience to join in the discussions.

At the conclusion of the study of soil conservation, from those considered in the class discussions, the students selected topics^{2/} which they wished to include in the panel discussion at the end of the term. Some of the students worked alone, others in groups. Each student selected a subject from the list of topics which he would study intensively in preparation for the panel discussion. Each prepared a bibliography as a preliminary step of his detailed study, blocked out an outline, then prepared a report on his subject to be given in class. Later the members of the class gave reports on topics they had selected at high school assembly

The panel discussion at the Commencement Program was informal. Each student gave a brief oral summary of important phases of his topic, after which the audience asked questions and joined in the forty-five minute discussion that followed. Prior to the discussion, Mr. Williams gave the audience an introductory summary of the purpose, plan, and accomplishments of the study carried on by his class.

The Texas State Committeemen of the Agricultural Adjustment Administration, the State Administrative officer and other representatives of the AAA, the members of the Board of Education of Hearne, the Deputy Superintendent of Schools, teachers, parents and other adults of Hearne Community and many others attended the commencement exercises.

1/ Mr. E. R. Alexander, Head of Agricultural Education, A. & M. C. was the panel leader.

2/ The list of selected topics is included in the appendix.

APPENDIX

SUGGESTED TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION

by student panel on Social and Economic Problems of Today at the Commencement Program. Hearne High School. May 19, 1941

Low income

Farmer's share of the national income

Average per capita farm income - Texas, South, Nation

Price and production changes in industry and agriculture

Low purchasing power of agricultural products

Freight Rates

Freight rate structure

Cost of hauling freight in different sections

Rates of different regions

Discrimination in favor of the East to the disadvantage of the rest of the Nation

Tariff

Trend in the tariff structure since World War I

Effects of high tariff rates on trade relations with other countries; on farm exports; on industry; on agriculture; on the South.

Rates on selected articles farmers buy. (Farmers sell their agricultural products in an open market and buy manufactured articles in a closed market.)

How patents, monopolies, copyrights work to the disadvantage of agriculture

Subsidies granted to other groups

Airlines, ocean shipping, waterways, highways, publishing concerns

Depletion of Soil Resources

Evidences of waste of natural resources

Extent of soil erosion

Causes and kinds of erosion

One crop farming (cotton - trend in production; amount of acreage devoted to cotton now as compared to former years; use of land taken out of cotton.)

1

Informational material relating to the following topics is available through the AAA office, College Station, Texas, or Southern Division of AAA, U.S.D.A., Washington, D. C.

Tenancy and soil conservation

Effects of soil waste on agriculture; on Nation; on tenancy; on income; on youth; on migration; on food and feed supply; on health.

Effects of soil and water control on floods in Texas

Efforts being made to check soil waste

Many State and Federal agencies are helping farmers conserve and protect their soil. Here are some of them:

Agricultural Adjustment Administration
Soil Conservation Service
Vocational Agricultural Workers
Agricultural Experiment Stations
Agricultural Colleges
Bureau of Agricultural Economics
Extension Service

Decline in exports of farm products to foreign markets

Change of United States from debtor to creditor Nation after World War I

Increased foreign production of farm products

Increased use of synthetic fibers (Germany, for example, notice decline in cotton imports since World War) 1/

Tariff

World War II

Results shown in huge surpluses of agricultural products, low prices

How can we get our foreign markets back?

Population Shifts

Migration of Southern youth to other sections

Extent of migration

Cause

Cost to South - money spent on education; loss of services

Changes of tenants and sharecroppers from one farm to another

Causes

Effects on agriculture

Effects on school attendance and efficiency

Need for education of tenants and landowners as to value of stable tenure, protection of land

Shifts caused by mechanized farming

Education

Education and Income

South : More children to educate
Less income
Less money to spend per capita
Larger percent of income used for education

Number of children of school age in South

Average income of the South

Average amount spent on the education of each child

Percent of total income spent on education

Education and Health

High disease rate in South

Diseases caused by dietary deficiencies

Need to understand the relation of wholesome food and good health

Lack of food and feed for home consumption

Need for farm people to grow food and feed necessary for wholesome diet

Education and Democracy

Failure to recognize rights and responsibilities as citizens
Example - low participation in committee elections in farm program;
low participation in political elections

Understanding of problems fundamental

Part public schools have in helping people to understand problems

Some of the Agencies Attempting to Help Solve Problems

Agricultural Adjustment Administration

Agricultural Experiment Stations

Agricultural Colleges

Extension Service

Land Use Planning

Soil Conservation Service

Vocational Agricultural Workers

Home Economics

Commodity Credit Corporation

Farm Credit Administration

Farm Security Administration

Rural Electrification Administration

Surplus Marketing Administration

Bureau of Agricultural Economics

Federal Crop Insurance Corporation

And Others

SUGGESTED PLAN FOR SETTING UP A TEACHING UNIT

WASTE OF SOIL RESOURCES

This unit was carried out as a part of the study of Social and Economic Problems of Today by Hearne students. It lasted approximately three weeks.

Hearne High School, Monday, March 3, 1941

Mr. L. D. Williams, Superintendent of Hearne Schools and teacher of the class.

12 students - 6 boys, 6 girls, three of students live on farm, the rest in small towns. The students come from three counties - Robertson, Burleson, and Milam - so these counties are included in most of the studies and comparisons.

Problem: WASTE OF SOIL RESOURCES

OBJECTIVES of Study

To help students become aware of and understand the problem.

To create a desire to bring about a change, that is, toward the solution of the problem.

APPROACH

Brief discussions of extent of our forest and soil resources when our country was young.

Exploitation of these resources then and now - example, one-crop farming.

Results in loss of resources.

Showing of picture exhibit illustrating causes, kinds of, and cures for the destruction of soil resources.

Showing of "The River", a documentary film. "Not only is the film a story of the river (Mississippi), what it has done and what man has done to it is a persuasive indictment of our practices of the past, together with a dramatic presentation of what we should do in the future if we are to avoid the disasters of soil and lumber loss and the effects of floods."

The students selected the broad topics for their study then the following outline was presented to them to help them decide its scope.

Waste of Soil Resources.

Directions to students: Under each heading in the following out-

line are some questions that may help you to decide the scope of your study. Consider the questions carefully, then answer as many of them as you can. Prepare the answers as briefly as possible, in outline form if you like, as sub-heads under the question. Do not attempt to look up the answers to the question. Add at least one question under each topic relating to an idea that you think should be included in this study. Be prepared to discuss the questions and outline. Include suggestions for information sources under each topic.

Extent of soil waste.

Do you know the extent of soil erosion in your community? in your county? How can you find out?

Are you interested primarily in the extent of erosion in the Nation or in your community? Why?

What comparisons of loss of soil resources can you make that will be of interest and of value? How can you illustrate your comparisons?

What evidences of waste (soil resources or other) have you discovered in your community or in adjoining communities or counties? Describe one briefly.

Causes and Effects

What are some of the causes of soil erosion?

Has one-crop farming had anything to do with soil erosion?

Do you know what percentage of the tilled acreage of this and adjoining counties is planted to cotton? to other crops?

Do you know whether the cotton acreage is increasing or decreasing in this community or area?

How much land is being planted to cotton as compared with 10 years ago?

What is the average yield per acre of cotton in Robertson County as compared with the yield for the past five years? for Milam County? for Burleson County? for the State? Give reasons for the increase or decrease.

If the cotton acreage is decreasing, what is happening to the acreage taken out to cotton?

What percentage of the farmers in Robertson County are tenants? in Burleson? in Milam? in Brazos? in the State?

What percentage of the farmers in these same areas are share-croppers? landowners?

Has the rate of tenancy had anything to do with the waste of soil resources and vice versa?

How does the destruction of forests increase soil erosion?

What are some of the immediate effects of loss of soil resources on the farmer? on the city dweller? on the community? on the State?

What are some of the long time effects of loss of soil resources on a Nation?

What are some of the effects of soil depletion on the youth of today? on National security? on civilization today and yesterday?

In what way do our soil resources affect our food supply? our health?

Remedies:

What are some of the things being done about loss of soil resources?

What percentage of farmers in this and adjoining counties carry out soil-building practices on their farms?

Of the amount of money available for carrying out soil-building practices under the Agricultural Conservation Program, how much was used in 1940? In 1939? How much money was unused?

What are some soil-building practices especially needed in this section of Texas?

Name some practices that you know of that are being carried out in your county.

What soil conservation practice do you suggest for a hillside eroded beyond hope of cultivation?

What further efforts do you suggest to increase the conservation of our soil?

Tell briefly what phase of this study you are most interested in and why.

SCOPE OF STUDY

Discussion Topics

Evidences of Waste of Natural Resources

Blazing gas jets on Texas oil fields.

Hillsides gashed by gullies.

Bare hills washed clean of topsoil

Streams and rivers thick with mud.

Increasingly disastrous floods.

Dead tree skeletons in a long stretch of swamp, void of all green things, of all life, caused by the careless disposal of waste from a factory manufacturing chemicals.

Cut over forests.

Fields worn out by one-crop farming yielding a bare existence to hard working farmers.

Migration of farmers from large areas where soil will no longer support them.

Kinds and Causes of Erosion

Kinds - wind erosion; water erosion, sheet erosion, leeching, gullying.

Causes

Clean tillage the year around leaves the topsoil unprotected from damage by wind and rain.

Lack of winter protection by snow and freezes and much rain increases water erosion.

Furrows plowed up and down hillsides form natural rills, then gullies that carry the soil away.

Hills skinned of forest cover and litter have no protection from the downward rush of the rain.

Where the rainfall is scant, when the thatched grass fibers that hold the soil in place are destroyed, the powdered soil is swirled in dust clouds through the air by a strong wind; where the rainfall is plentiful the water washes unprotected soil into streams and rivers.

Row cropping accelerates the rate of erosion.

Tenancy results in the careless use of soil resources.

Continued one-crop farming robs the soil of natural elements necessary to the growth of plants.

Trend in cotton production

Export market, surpluses, effect of present war.

Production adjustment to market demands.

Acreage diverted from cotton production in Brazos, Robertson, Milam, Burleson.

What is being done with the land being taken out of cotton production?

Extent of erosion

In the Nation, the State, the county, the community.

"Sixty-one percent of all the Nation's land badly damaged by erosion is in the Southern States. An expanse of Southern farm land as large as South Carolina has been gullied and washed away; at least 22 million acres of once fertile soil has been ruined beyond repair. Another area the size of Oklahoma and Alabama combined has been seriously damaged by erosion. In addition, the sterile sand and gravel washed off this land has covered over a fertile valley acreage equal in size to Maryland." 1/

Of the total acreage of Texas, 51.1 percent is affected by erosion, 13.7 percent severely damaged by erosion. 2/

"The vast amount of silt and sand carried by Texas streams may be illustrated by a survey of the Bureau of Agricultural Engineering which reported that 2,500,000 tons of soil materials were carried past Austin in one 24 hour period during the September, 1936, flood of the Colorado River." 3/

Effects of Loss of Soil Resources

Immediate and long-time effects

- On food supply .
- On health
- On youth
- On migration of population
- On tenancy as well as effects of tenancy on soil conservation
- On social and economic conditions of community, State, Nation, income, purchasing power, standards of living.
- On National security; civilization itself.

Efforts to Check Soil Erosion

Many agencies are helping farmers conserve and protect their soil.

Here are some of them:

- Agricultural teachers in High Schools and Colleges
- Soil Conservation Service

1/ Report to President on Economic Conditions in the South.

2/ Reconnaissance erosion survey of the United States, 1934.

3/ From talk delivered at Summer Short Course dealing with Conservation of Natural Resources, given at several colleges in Texas, 1939.

Vocational Agricultural Workers
Agricultural Experiment Stations
Bureau of Agricultural Economics
Federal and State Extension Service
Agricultural Adjustment Administration

Farmers are taking advantage of soil-building payments offered through the Agricultural Adjustment Programs to help them carry out soil building practices long needed on their farms. Much of the land being released from the production of soil-depleting crops is being used for crops that conserve and protect the soil and for the production of food and feed for home consumption.

Farmer committeemen help farmers select practices needed to insure present and future wise land use.

Through this program payments are made for constructing terraces, for planting cover crops, for strip cropping, contour farming, for constructing check dams, and for planting forest trees on land unfit for farming, as well as other practices. Certain materials are furnished to farmers on request without any outlay of cash, the cost of the materials to be taken out of the soil-building payments due to the farm.

Many farmers are carrying out practices beyond those made possible by soil conservation payments. Others do not avail themselves of opportunities for soil conservation through the program.

In Texas, 1939, of the \$7,110,000 available under AAA Program for carrying out soil-building practices on Texas farms \$2,230,000 or 31.4 percent was unused.

County	Net Soil-Bldg. Allowance	Soil-building payment not earned	Percent not earned	Net soil- building allowance	Soil-build- ing payment not earned	Percent not earned
1937			:	1938		
Milam	\$48,522.	\$24,042	49.5	\$54,000.	\$5,400.	10
Robertson	44,875.	7,683	17.1	57,900	2,300	3.9
Brazos	30,388	11,445	37.6	25,400	5,600	22
Burleson	28,291	10,877	38.4	47,800	4,300	9

Reports (Selected and given by students)

Soil Resources and Health
Conserving the Soil
How Conservation of Our Natural Resources Will Lay Foundation for Our Posterity and What Lack of Conservation Has Done for Our Country and Other Countries.
Forestry and Its Connection With Agriculture
Soil Erosion and Effects on Economic Conditions
Soil Resources and Migration of Population

Tenants and the Care of the Soil
How Presenting the Problems of Soil Erosion Will Help the Farmer
Need of a Soil Conservation District For the Prevention of Soil Erosion
Prevention and Correction of Soil Erosion
The Effect of Soil Depletion Upon the Present Day Youth

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES (for students)

This is a suggested list of activities, some of which may be carried out individually by members of the class, the others by groups. It is not intended that all the activities be carried out - only those in which you are interested. If you have some activity in mind, add it to the list.

Select a topic relating to the problem, in which you are particularly interested. Read all the related material that you can, prepare and give a report to the class.

Make comparisons of soil erosion in your community with other communities, States, Regions. Illustrate your comparisons.

Make a soil erosion map of Texas showing the extent of erosion in the State. (Refer to page 11, "A Description of the Agriculture and Type of Farming Areas in Texas.")

The class might prepare a program for a student forum to present problems in which farm people are interested.

Make a study of and list various attempts of Federal and State agencies to assist farmers to conserve and protect their soil.

Make a graph or chart showing how many farmers are taking advantage of soil-building practices offered under the AAA Program. Make a list of those practices that can be carried out under this program. Find out what materials are furnished to farmers for carrying out the practices.

Discuss with farmers the need for soil conservation; the reasons why they do or do not make efforts to conserve their soil.

Find out what the provisions of the Soil Conservation and Domestic Allotment Act are.

Letters, visits, contacts, debates, excursions, oral and written reports, charts, notebooks, may all be made use of in the study of the problem.

Possible excursions:

To see examples of erosion in and around this community.



To see soil-building practices being carried out.
To agricultural experiment stations.
To Austin to attend a session of the State legislature.

The class may be organized into a newspaper staff with the various members representing the various divisions of a newspaper. Each member of the class may bring a clipping of a news story, or an editorial, or cartoon, or poem, relating to the problem. All the clippings, cartoons, etc., might be combined into a bulletin board newspaper.

Compare farm practices for the care of the land here and farm practices in other countries.

Prepare a map showing the extent and location of erosion in your county.

Prepare maps, charts, photographs, etc., to illustrate your panel discussions.

Why not illustrate your reports with camera shots?

Plan an illustrated bulletin-program to be distributed at your commencement exercises.

Reminders for Notebooks

Keep a record of the kind and source of materials received relating to this study.

Keep a vocabulary list of new terms and their meanings.

Be sure to keep a bibliography of books, articles, and materials used in your study.

Include in your notebook comments on or a brief description of the film, "The River".

Also include in your notebook news articles, cartoons, pictures, poems, etc. relating to your study. Do not put a news article in your notebook which you have not read and which you do not understand. Be sure to write the name of the paper or magazine and the date under the article.

From time to time discuss your reports, your notebook, the books you are reading, materials, and the like, with your teacher.

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FORM USED FOR FARM SURVEY OF TABOR, TEXAS

[illegible]

SUMMARY OF
FARM SURVEY OF THE TABOR COMMUNITY

1. 60 farms surveyed - 12,500 acres
2. Average size of farm - $208 \frac{1}{3}$ acres
3. Land owners living on farms - 42
4. Land owners living elsewhere - 18
5. Tenant families living on farm - 52
6. Average size of families - 4
7. Number of hired hands on 60 farms - 14
8. Percent of families that are land owners - 44%
9. Percent of families that are tenants - 56 %
10. Percent of farm owners that do not live on farm - 30%
11. Total cultivated acres - 4395.75 acres
12. Average amount of cultivated acres to each farm - 73.26 acres
13. Total acres of cotton on 60 farms - 1882 acres
14. Average acres of cotton per farm - 31.36 acres
15. Average acres of cotton per family - 20.23 acres
16. Total acres in feed - 2239.25 acres
17. Average acres of feed on each farm - 37.32 acres
18. Total acres in orchard - 26.35 acres
19. Average acres in orchard on each farm - .43 acre
20. 82 families with gardens
21. 12 families without gardens
22. Acres of cover crops - 85 acres
23. Average acres of cover crops per farm - 1.42 acres
24. Acres soil-building crops on 60 farms - 278.75 acres
25. Average acres soil-building crops on farm - 4.64 acres
26. Acres terraced on 60 farms - 951 acres
27. Acres terraced per farm - 15.85 acres

28. Improved pastures - 404 acres
29. Acres improved pastures per farm - 6.73 acres
30. Contour farming - 158 acres
31. Acres contour farming on each farm - 2.63 acres
32. Total horses on 60 farms - 281
33. Average number of horses per family - 3
34. Average number of horses per farm - 5
35. Total number of cattle on 60 farms - 1107
36. Average number of cattle per family - 12
37. Families without cattle - 5
38. Total hogs on 60 farms - 370
39. Number of families with hogs - 89
40. Average number of hogs per family - 4
41. Total number of chickens on 60 farms - 5,277
42. Average number of chickens per farm - 88
43. Average number of chickens per family - 57
44. Total number of turkeys on 60 farms - 310
45. Average number of turkeys per farm - 5
46. Average number of turkeys per family - 3
47. Total number houses on 60 farms - 92
48. Number houses occupied - 86
49. Number of vacant houses - 6
50. Houses painted - 25
51. Unpainted houses - 61
52. Screened houses - 68
53. Unscreened houses - 18
54. Houses with electric lights - 22
55. Houses with running water - 15
56. Houses with bath - 10
57. Houses with sewage - 4

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"Grassland" - 10 minutes

Portraying the destruction of natural pasture grasslands through soil erosion, drought and overgrazing.

"The River" - 35 minutes

The mighty Mississippi in good behavior and bad; its influence on the life and economic situation of our Nation. An unusually good film.

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The farmer and his farm as the basis of our civilization. The farmer's contribution to National wealth and the body politic.

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Of general interest in explanation of the causes and results of excess run-off waters, muddying the Nation's streams and eroding the soil

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CHARTS

Wall Size Charts

Cotton Farm Before and After Agricultural Adjustment Program

Farm and Town Recover Together

Freight Rate

Interdependence of Farm and Non-farm Income

Price and Production Changes of Agriculture and Industry, 1929-32

Purchasing Power of Cotton and Wheat, 1913, 1933, 1940

Why the Nation Has A Farm Program, Set 2

Charts and Tables, small

Acreage Affected by Erosion, by States (table)

Acreage Affected by Erosion in Texas (Chart)

Articles of Association

Education: Total population of school age, total and per child income,
and total current school expenses by States and Regions, speci-
fied years

Estimated Governmental Subsidies to Non-farm Groups, Fiscal Year, 1939

Farm Income per Capita, Agricultural Conservation and Parity Payments,
1939, and Federal Security Administration Grants and Rural Re-
habilitation Loans, 1935, 1940, United States, by AAA Regions

Farms with and without cows, hogs, chickens, pastures, by counties ,
Texas

Farms with and without specified sources of food in the Southern Region

Farm Plan Sheet

Freight Rate Chart

Net Immigrant remittances from the United States, 1919-38

Participation in County and Community Committee Elections, AAA
December 1940, by counties



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Participation in Cotton Marketing Quota Referendum, 1939

Per Capita gross income and per capita cash income from farm production in Texas, the 10 cotton-producing States and 38 other States

Population Movements To and From Farms

Price and Production Changes in Certain Industries, 1929-32

Purchasing Power of Cotton and Wheat, January 15, 1913, 1933, 1940

Soil-building Allowance Used and Unused, 1936, 1937, 1938, by counties, Texas, AAA, College Station

Some Examples of Tariff Rates on Articles Bought by Farm Families
(Rates on Tariff Act of 1930)

Total Calculated tariff duties on imports, United States, 1919-38

Trend in Cotton Production in Selected Counties, Texas

EXHIBIT

Picture Exhibit showing some of the problems of farm people since World War I and efforts of Agricultural Adjustment Administration to help solve them, Southern Division, Agricultural Adjustment Administration, United States Department of Agriculture.



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MOVIES

"Farm and City Forward Together" - 8 minutes

Indicative of the dependency of city on the farm for increased employment as well as for food.

"Grassland" - 10 minutes

Portraying the destruction of natural pasture grasslands through soil erosion, drought and overgrazing.

"The River" - 35 minutes

The mighty Mississippi in good behavior and bad; its influence on the life and economic situation of our nation. An unusually good film.

"Salt of the Earth" - 20 minutes

The farmer and his farm as the basis of our civilization. The farmer's contribution to national wealth and the body politic.

"Wise Land Use Pays" - 20 minutes

Exceptionally lucid illustration of recognized practices for the improvement of the farm in cooperation with the National Farm Program. Rebuilding of the soil of the Nation.

"Muddy Waters" - 10 minutes

Of general interest in explanation of the causes and results of excess run-off waters, muddying the Nation's streams and eroding the soil.

"Flow, Planes, and Peace" - 25 minutes

A timely portrayal of the dependency of the National Defense Program on agriculture, picturing the trend of thought now most apparent to the Nation.



CITIZENSHIP AND THE FARM PROGRAM
Franklin High School - Civics Class
Tests Given by Mrs. Davison to her Students at the End of This Three Weeks Unit.

TRUE-FALSE TEST

DIRECTIONS: Answer YES to the following statements that are true and NO to those that are not true. Put your answer in the blank space to the right of the statement.

The following is an example:

EXAMPLE: Low income is one of the major problems of the South.----- Yes

-
-
1. Soil erosion has a detrimental or bad effect on people who live in towns and cities as well as on farms.-----
 2. Farmers are getting a fair share of the national income.--
 3. A high percentage of farmers cooperating in Agricultural Adjustment Programs vote in the committee elections.-----
 4. High tariff rates work to the advantage of agriculture.---
 5. The purchasing power of wheat and cotton is less than it was before World War I.-----
 6. An understanding of economic problems of our Nation will help our people to be better citizens.-----
 7. Our export market for farm products has been increasing since World War I.-----
 8. Marketing quotas are intended to balance the flow of agricultural commodities to demand and thus keep their price steady. _____
 9. It costs more to haul freight in the South and Southwest than it does in the East.-----
 10. The present World War will not affect our exports of farm products.-----
 11. Needed soil conservation practices should be carried out on every farm.-----
 12. A Nation's prosperity depends on that Nation's agriculture. _____
 13. Soil erosion is taking place at an alarming rate in the United States.-----



14. The present freight rate structure is fair to all sections of the country.-----
15. Estimated government subsidies to non-farm groups in 1939 amounted to over a billion and a half dollars.-----
16. The purchasing power of cotton in 1940 was greater than it was in 1913.-----
17. Farmers get low prices for the products they grow while they have to pay high prices for the manufactured articles that they buy.-----
18. High tariff rates encourage the sale of our agricultural products in other countries.-----
19. Low farm income does not affect people who live in cities and towns.-----
20. Payments are made under the AAA Program to farmers to help them carry out soil-building practices on their farms.-----

MULTIPLE-CHOICE TEST

DIRECTIONS: One of the three phrases at the end of each sentence will make the statement a correct one. Each phrase is numbered (1), (2), or (3). Select the phrase that will make the statement correct and place the number of the phrase in the blank space to the right of the statement. The following is an example:

Farm income is (1) less than that of non-farm groups, (2) more than that of non-farm groups (3) equal to that of non-farm groups---

(1)

-
-
1. The average per capita cash farm income for Texas, 1924-37 was (1) more than \$500 (2) less than \$250 (3) more than \$800. - _____
 2. The cost of hauling freight in the Southwest by rail is (1) more than the cost in the East (2) less than the cost in the East (3) about the same as the cost in the East.----- _____
 3. Cotton marketing quotas are necessary because of (1) cotton surpluses (2) cotton shortages (3) small cotton acreages.-- _____
 4. High tariffs are intended to protect (1) laborers and manufacturers (2) cotton farmers (3) wheat farmers.----- _____
 5. The South is largely devoted to (1) industry (2) farming (3) mining.----- _____
 6. Per capita farm income means (1) income for each person on the farm (2) income for each farm family (3) income for each farm _____
 7. Acreage in Texas affected by erosion amounts to (1) almost half of the acreage of the State (2) a very small amount of the acreage of the State (3) less than one third of the acreage of the State.----- _____
 8. Foreign production of farm products since the World War has (1) been decreasing (2) remained the same (3) been increasing. _____
 9. The number of eligible farmers taking part in the committee elections in 1939 in Texas amounted to (1) 8.6% (2) 50% (3) 75%.----- _____
 10. The major provisions of the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 were held illegal by the decision of the Supreme Court in the (1) Schechter Case (2) Hoosac-Mills Case (3) Mulford Vs. Smith.----- _____
 11. Emphasis under the present AAA Act is placed on (1) soil conservation (2) soil depletion (3) low yields.----- _____
 12. Purchasing power of cotton means (1) price of cotton (2) how much cotton will buy (3) cost of cotton goods.----- _____



13. The AAA farm program is operated in counties and communities by (1) committees appointed from Washington (2) committees appointed by the State office (3) committees democratically elected by farmers themselves.-----
14. The tariff on a pair of overalls costing one dollar is about (1) 12 cents (2) 33 cents (3) 37 cents.-----
15. The county and community committeemen are elected (1) every year (2) every three years (3) every five years.-----
16. Farmers who take part in the cotton marketing quota referendums are (1) those farmers who cooperate in the Triple A programs (2) all farmers (3) all farmers who have an interest in cotton grown during the current year.-----
17. The present Secretary of Agriculture is (1) H. A. Wallace (2) Claude Wickard (3) Chester Davis.-----
18. The income of the Southern farmer is (1) equal to that of other farm groups (2) lower than that of other farm groups (3) above that of other farm groups.-----
19. The carry-over of American cotton at the beginning of the 1941 season is about (1) 3,000,000 bales (2) 6,000,000 bales (3) 12,000,000 bales.-----

